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FOOD WHICH FAILS TO FEED.

BY LOUIS WINDMÜLLER.

THE worth of a man depends largely on the food he digests. In the opinion of experts, a majority of the human race suffer from disease engendered by errors in diet; yet few are aware that they commit any errors, and still fewer take pains to avoid them. This is specially true of our own country. The ambitious American is apt to consider the time spent on the care of his body as wasted; to him fortune, power or fame is of greater importance than health. Although it is well known that those who wish to enjoy a long and happy life must eat little at a time and eat that with deliberate satisfaction, he scarcely permits all his daily meals to absorb as much of his day as Mr. Gladstone, for instance—who thoroughly masticated every morsel of food—required for one meal.

The breakfast of our suburban resident is taken in early solitude; he washes down the substantial portions of the meal with draughts of coffee, and hurries away to enter upon his toil. At noon he approaches a “quick lunch” counter, seizes a sandwich, and, standing in the midst of a surging crowd, he alternately swallows mouthfuls of ham and of cold water. Suddenly his partner appears, whispers portentous news about a common business venture, when, hastily draining his glass of its icy contents, he leaves the remnant of food and hastens away.

Some persons fail to take, when needed, even the most scanty refreshment. The manager of a certain publishing house, a man of unbounded energy and robust constitution, was ruined by such neglect. If his time for luncheon came while there was business to be attended to, he delayed or entirely omitted it; in consequence his health gave way, and, with it, a prosperous firm of

world-wide reputation failed. Merchants on the continent of Europe are not apt to fall into such errors. They close their offices, to enjoy a substantial meal, between twelve and two, with the punctuality with which at maturity they meet their obligations. We might follow their example with advantage. Those who are fortunate enough to have access to one of the convenient retreats from our crowded thoroughfares called club-rooms, should, when the hour strikes, proceed thither, to be served with excellent food by trained waiters, while comfortably seated with friends around hospitable boards. Sociability, a chief mark of distinction between man and other animals, promotes digestion. "A fig for your bill of fare; show me the bill of your company," said Dean Swift. A repast in such circumstances not only strengthens the body but invigorates the mind, and enables us to resume our task with renewed energy.

Happiness and health depend on our ability to forget, as soon as necessity for the immediate consideration of it has passed, the trouble which has absorbed us. In the family circle, at meal-times especially, temper should be subdued and unpleasant conversation avoided. A woman of tact refrains from increasing the burden of her husband by a tale of her woes, even if he should be weak enough to brood over his business complications. Dining once with a manufacturer of haircloth, I asked his wife for an explanation of his painful silence, which contrasted strangely with the exuberant spirits of the children. "He is counting the hair that will make your cloth," she whispered in extenuation. When a grave crisis occurs, men of heavy responsibilities are liable to become victims of their anxiety. One of our largest and best-managed banks lost in this way several of its ablest officers, and a prominent railroad three of its presidents within ten years. Considering that, under the circumstances, their constant personal attention was a paramount duty, they died because they could not tear themselves away from the responsibility they had assumed long enough to take the relaxation which their health required.

This engrossment of mind is by no means confined to men engaged in commercial pursuits; Keppler, *Puck's* genial artist, met his untimely death through a disturbance of digestion caused by worry over the Centennial Exhibition. When we see a far-away look in the eye of a journalist while he takes his food mechanically, he composes an editorial; the politician delivers a

silent address, the divine a sermon, during their perfunctory attendance at family dinner. It may not be a symptom of disease to think while eating, but serious occupation of the mind, when one is so engaged, must eventually lead to disease. Ambitious men often spend their vitality before they can reap the fruit of their labor, and, when they have become successful, wealth fails to compensate for exhausted health.

There is no less danger in eating too much. The capacity of our stomach is limited, and it produces only gastric juice enough to digest what we require for the sustenance of our vital powers. The surplus ferments, and, when too often indulged in, excess leads to disease or obesity. I derive more pleasure, in satisfying the appetite which nature has provided, from leisurely munching a piece of bread made in my kitchen, than from the delicious dessert which follows a sumptuous dinner. The French proverb, "*L'appétit vient en mangeant*," usually translated "the more we have the more we want," originally meant to imply that the titillation of the palate created by the piquant morsel is a natural craving; artificial means to stimulate the desire for food are pernicious. Persons who cannot resist the temptation to partake of the savory dishes which are within reach of their senses, might learn a salutary lesson from the Shakers, who place their simple ration before them and leave the table when they have disposed of it.

The practice in our best hotels in the cities and at the summer resorts of furnishing all a man wants to eat for a fixed price, offers temptations to gormandize. Beginning his breakfast with fruit and porridge, the greedy boarder orders fish, steak, chops, eggs and rolls, with tea or coffee. A customary introduction to his luncheon consists of soup and fish, followed by roasts and game; the waiter, anxious for fees, supplements this with a formidable array of other dishes, containing a surfeit of vegetables and "entrées." In solemn silence, as if undergoing penance, our diner resolutely attacks one after another; not uncommonly washing down the most discordant "*menu*" with copious draughts of water, cooled to a temperature fifty-five degrees below that of his stomach. One such meal is heavy enough to be of itself a burden; still it is sometimes repeated in the evening at dinner and followed at night by a "light" supper, a second and a third meal being taken before the first could digest.

One of the Roman Emperors scarcely ever left the table before he had thoroughly crammed himself and drunk to intoxication, when he would fall asleep. After a short lapse of time, a slave put a feather down his throat and made his stomach disgorge its contents. When our American glutton finds himself in distress through overeating, he resorts to drugs, the continued use of which weakens his organs until they lose their vitality. The European plan of serving at fixed prices portions of food which must be paid for as ordered, saves from overindulgence at least those persons who are too economical to pay for what they do not need. Such a method would be advantageous to the hotel-keeper who, under the present system, is compelled to serve not alone what his guests consume, but also what they leave. I know the manager of a city hotel who goes himself into the kitchen, carefully inspects what is returned from the dining-room, and sells decent-looking slices to keepers of cheap restaurants, where these leavings form "*pièces de résistance*" for guileless patrons.

Much may thus be saved in large towns, but the wholesome food which is daily thrown to the dogs by hotel keepers of summer resorts might feed an army. Change would involve more careful supervision of the kitchen; another great obstacle is the importunacy of guests who give a waiter hardly time to go for what they want as far as the end of the dining-room. If the custom of serving a "*table d'hôte*" as it prevails on the continent of Europe were adopted, we could, while partaking of good cheer, enjoy the conversation of neighbors. As a steaming dish is brought from the kitchen and passes along the table from one guest to another, many opportunities for intercourse offer themselves, and the pleasures of digestion are promoted by the spice of conviviality. Such a meal, consisting of soup, fish, entrées, roast, a vegetable, cheese and wine, appears to be, at the average price of five francs, cheap enough to the American traveller, but it takes more time than he has to spare. When our public dinners are served in this way, those who go chiefly to partake of the ensuing feast of reason often lose patience before the speeches begin, and those who, under the guise of guests, are expected to furnish that part of the entertainment, fail to enjoy their dinner. As long as speeches prey on their minds, and while they fret lest a predecessor may steal a march on their ideas, they cannot be at ease. Delivered of their pent-up eloquence, they may at a late

hour moisten the parched tongue with a glass of wine or soothe the heated brain with a cigar; but the dinner is over, and when they go home they are more often hungry than satisfied. In France, after the fish, addresses are sandwiched between courses; waiters are signalled to bring the on-coming course as each brief discourse is finished. It is difficult to introduce this practice where hurried caterers drive uneasy guests. But, according to the custom of the Japanese, we could listen to our orators before the banquet begins, and then offer them our undivided hospitality.

It is astonishing what simple food, and how little of it, may satisfy the human body. Socrates said, "The less a man needs, the nearer he is to God, who needs nothing." I was still a student when, overtaken by the pangs of hunger, during a vacation tramp, I knocked at the door of a peasant's cottage. My nostrils were greeted by a delicious odor which rose from a huge bowl of potato soup. Cordially invited to join the family who surrounded it, I helped myself to a share of the contents by dipping, like the rest, a long ladle, of which I had exclusive use, into the depth of the dish, until it was empty. The bright eyes and happy faces of the girls, my youthful imagination and keen appetite, gave to that simple meal a delight which, after fifty years, continues to linger in my memory. Would that the poor of our cities could enjoy such healthful fare! A charitable association, of which I used to be a member, furnished to every comer, for five cents, a quart of meat stew, well cooked, and composed of beef or mutton, onions and turnips, flavored with fragrant herbs; a pint of coffee, with milk and sugar, and four ounces of white bread. The raw material of which this wholesome dinner was composed cost three cents; five cents a pound for the meat, three cents for the bread and one cent for the vegetables. Our poor must pay these prices twice and thrice over for food which is the worse for keeping, because every one of the numerous shopkeepers of whom they are compelled to purchase sells so little that he cannot sell it while it is fresh, nor, since he must pay rent, without large profit. In Rivington Street, New York, a girl recently died from the effect of ptomaines contained in her small steak. It is a grievous wrong that our laborer should be compelled to support, besides his own family, the family of a butcher who will sell such meat for nourishment. New York spent millions for a road to speed horses of wealthy sportsmen;

one million would suffice to erect free markets quite near habitations of mechanics. If these were placed without charge at the disposal of reliable dealers, on condition that they would sell good food at a moderate advance on cost, the poor could obtain it at about the prices I have named without being indebted to charity. Owners of a "department store" recently set aside a vast floor of their building for a popular market, where they sell good food below the average prices. The location of the store is not convenient to many, but its market being well patronized and remunerative, the experiment demonstrates the practicability of my suggestion. It may close the shops of dealers who now sell dyspeptic food at high prices; but for every one whom such competition might compel to seek a better vocation, the families of a hundred laborers would be benefited. Instead of getting corrupt meat and stale vegetables, they could exchange their hard earnings for wholesome viands.

The best food, however, will not serve for healthful nutrition if it is not properly prepared, and it is, therefore, of great importance that a knowledge of the art of cooking should be more widely disseminated. Prejudice against manual labor, combined with a prevailing ignorance of the culinary art, drives too many of our families into boarding-houses. In Europe, women are apprenticed or go into service; they have learned how to make, from scanty material, a palatable meal before they assume the responsibility of matrimony. Steps have been taken in many States to teach them by the establishment of cooking schools, but these fail to give instruction where it is most needed. Girls should in all our public schools be taught how to cook a dinner, an accomplishment which, to most of them, is of no smaller importance than the ability to read and write; it always will command a husband or remunerative employment.

To keep intact the liquid substance which forms seventy-five per cent. of our living frame, we need five pints of fluid a day, half of which is contained in the ordinary solid food. The other half we must drink, to promote digestion; without moisture the face wrinkles and the complexion turns sallow, just like the plant that suffers for want of rain. Advice not to drink while eating is chiefly given to persons who cannot refrain from using liquid to expedite the passage of the solids they will not take the trouble to masticate.

The best beverage is water, fresh from a spring or well not contaminated by sewage. Natural mineral water should be substituted when the common water obtainable is of doubtful purity, or the latter should be distilled and then cooled by laying it on ice; when drunk too cold, it chills or retards digestion; frozen water, the origin of which is unknown, may contain microbes. The indiscriminate and immoderate use of ice-water is a reprehensible American habit. When I turn to my neighbor at the hotel table, a servant hastens to replenish my goblet with the pieces of ice which I had just succeeded in removing; in my room, when I ring the bell, a waiter silently pushes a pitcher of ice-water through the half opened door, without asking for my wants.

After water, I consider these beverages, when taken in moderation, as the most wholesome for adults: Light, pure, natural wine, containing not over twelve per cent. of alcohol; seasoned spirits, distilled from cereals or grapes, and diluted with water; coffee from good berries, freshly roasted and freshly ground; pure beer made of barley, hops and water, containing not over seven per cent. of alcohol.

In regard to alcohol, there can be only the one opinion, that persons should abstain from it who are too weak to restrain their appetite. Two-thirds of our physicians have testified that a temperate use of spirits is more apt to improve than to injure health. Alcohol stimulates secretions required for digestion, supplies nourishment, and, at a later period, it often sustains the strength of the man who has led a rational life.* Dr. Liebig, the German chemist, says that "no product can surpass wine as a restorative and as a means to correct a misproportion of nutrition." Dr. Berard, a noted French surgeon, finds that alcohol is the most effective stimulant of the gastric juice. Dr. William Jenner, a famous English physician, who died at the age of eighty-three, took brandy when he suffered from indigestion. Pope Leo, who avers that wine cheers the heart, enjoys his Chianti at the age of ninety.

The influence of liquor largely depends on how we take it; nectar, when, encircled by congenial friends, we serenely and slowly imbibe it, becomes poison when in haste we recklessly toss off one glass after another. My friend David, for many years

* Professor Atwater of Wesleyan University has, by experiments on a man in the respiration calorimeter, recently demonstrated the nourishing qualities of alcohol.

executive officer of a large corporation, would receive a visit from one or the other of his numerous out-of-town agents, and invite him to the hospitality of a neighboring café. After a hurried indulgence in liquor, they would return to their business; but, before David had become comfortably settled, a second agent would appear and he would be treated like his predecessor. This practice continued until poor David became a tippler. He lost the confidence of his directors and the proud position he occupied. If, in the first place, he had been compelled to sit down with his guest in the café, they might have enjoyed one drink at their ease, and that would have absorbed so much valuable time that he would have been too conscientious to spend more on a second one. Saloon-keepers should be compelled to furnish chairs and tables, instead of the twelve beds which an absurd provision in the New York law prescribes in certain cases. In Europe, American bar-rooms are unknown. The English sit with their customary tranquillity while served by a pretty barmaid; the French "*buvette*," a mere closet, is used chiefly by cab drivers; Germans, who *per capita* drink more and become intoxicated less than others, speak with contempt of the glass which occasionally they imbibe while standing, as a "*stehseidel*." Bars should be abolished or restricted to the sale for families; liquors should not be served in licensed premises except to persons who are seated.

David found a worthy successor in friend Jonathan, a man of steady habits but unbridled ambition. He aspired to become President of the Company, when the gentleman who nominally bore the title suddenly died. Jonathan succeeded to the post, but anxiety impeded his digestion so that he soon had to follow his predecessor. David no longer perturbed by the pressure of business continues to enjoy his customary toddy.

A clergyman of my acquaintance, who, by the querulous, fault-finding petulance of fanatic temperance apostles amongst his fashionable congregation, often was harassed, says that we have a dozen gluttons to every drunkard, and that every glutton becomes a crank. Waggishly he changed into "O, Lord, reliver us," the prayer for deliverance from evil.

The experience of temperance societies who advocate total abstinence shows that, while "Maine" laws may "prohibit," they seldom hinder the use of liquor. Legislation never can eradicate the natural craving for stimulants; children of Adam and Eve

take forbidden fruit in preference to other since their progenitors were tempted to taste it. Prohibition States consume larger quantities of vile concoctions than those which allow perfect freedom. Four persons out of five amongst the ignorant poor break the temperance pledge after they are persuaded to take it. I had a coachman who broke it habitually, so that I once insisted on being present when, to retain his position, he again took the customary vows. Shocked by the perfunctory ceremony, I induced the priest periodically to visit my servant, whom his kind persuasion eventually succeeded in saving. Fanatical coercion is less apt to make converts than friendly counsel and worthy example.

As much, if not more, harm is done by adulteration of the liquor sold than by over-indulgence. The wealthy, who, regardless of price, buy from reliable purveyors the best, may be protected; but who is to guard the indigent against imposition, when he wants to drown his care in the foam of a mug? Smell and taste deceive the unhappy victim. Even if he had facilities for analyzing his drink, he might still remain in ignorance of its composition, since, in imitation of wholesome liquor, concoctions have been made with a skill which baffles the expert chemist. In Munich, I can enjoy without evil consequence a quart of "Hofbräu" beer; when taken here, a smaller measure may produce heartburn and headache.

In Bavaria, Government Inspectors analyze the brew when and where it is made. If the liquor is impure, or has not had time properly to ripen, so that it is liable to ferment in the stomach, it is emptied into the street, and the producer is fined and imprisoned. In New York City alone, three chemical laboratories manufacture concoctions for the adulteration and coloring of beer, whose sales annually aggregate several hundred thousand dollars.

In England, analysts of the Excise are compelled to search for suspicious beverage. A vender in whose possession they find adulterated liquor is fined from \$100 to \$500, and his license is withdrawn. Of a number of brewers tried for this offence, about ten every year have been found guilty.

On the continent of Europe, wine and beer are prepared for export by "fortification," as an admixture of amylic alcohol, distilled from potato spirit, is called; it makes the beverage more durable, but less wholesome. Insalubrious dyes are added, and salicylic acid, a most injurious ingredient, is used to arrest fer-

mentation. This permits manufacturers to market their product more quickly than they could if they waited for the natural process; the liquor which contains this acid, when too much of it is taken, becomes deleterious to the kidneys.

Dr. E. H. Bartley, Chief Chemist of the Brooklyn Board of Health, claims that the smallest quantity which can make salicylic effective for this purpose is ten grains to the gallon, and that three grains have been found in one pint of wine. Dr. Cyrus Edson confirms the statement. Of American beer which was made in different parts of the country and tested by our Department of Agriculture, according to their report of 1887, six bottles out of twenty-six contained salicylic acid, and one out of two foreign bottles, which was made in Bremen and labelled "Kaiser." The same report contains the result of the analysis of seventy samples of American wine, eighteen of which contained salicylic acid, and thirteen sulphurous acid. In the composition of fifty other samples of sweetened California wine, hardly a trace was found of grape juice.

Laws enacted by various States to prevent adulteration are seldom enforced, because they lead to corruption and to discrimination in favor of manufacturers in other States, where similar laws are evaded or do not exist.

Our internal revenue law which requires liquors to be stamped should, when amended, provide that Government Inspectors be required to test the liquor and stamp only that which they find to be pure; and that the impure should be destroyed under their supervision. Consumers would cheerfully pay a tax which would effectually protect them against adulteration. Respectable dealers and honest brewers would welcome a control which would endorse the purity of their beverages. In Germany and France, the use of unwholesome ingredients in anything that is used there is prohibited.

A considerable portion of the milk sold in large cities has first been skimmed, and then diluted with water, a process by which it becomes less nourishing and, when the water is impure, dangerous to health. The greedy farmers who thus manipulate their product under cover of the night are apt to use water from the most convenient well, which often is located near the cess-pool. When dealers receive the cans at the railroad station, they are in too great a hurry to analyze a fluid which has the customary appearance; the

quality can be ascertained only when a lactometer is carefully used. Some years ago, a number of diseased tailless cows, fed in dirty stables with rotten swill, were accidentally discovered; Dr. Doremus studied the cases, and, for a while, milk was analyzed; as a rule, however, municipal Boards of Health in large cities cannot or will not examine it. Helpless infants must continue to be fed on poor milk, until our dairy system is better controlled. In some thirty schools in various parts of the country, farmers may learn that cows must have pure air, a sufficiency of clean water and wholesome food in a good pasture. If the privilege of selling milk were confined to persons who have taken a course of such lessons, and who have passed an examination under the auspices of the Department of Agriculture, and if their milk were sold in original cans only, we might secure decent food for the children. The seller of impure milk is fined and imprisoned in several parts of Europe.

Glucose made from potato starch, and colored with aniline, is substituted for fruit juices to flavor soda, the popular summer drink. A similar indigestible compound is used to make candy, the enormous consumption of which alone is sufficient to turn us into a nation of hypochondriacs. Our palates begin in early childhood to be pampered with nasty sweets, and as we grow up we do not always discard the habit. My friend Nascher, who had acquired this taste in his New England home, always kept a huge supply of candies on his sideboard, which he generously offered to his visitors. Efforts to dissuade him from immoderate use of sweetmeats were of no avail, and even led to estrangement. One day, when he fell ill, physicians had to pump the undigested stuff from his inflated stomach. When again we met, the genial smile had died from his face; packages of Boiler's Best no longer distended his pockets, and the clothes hung slovenly around his shrunken body. No medical aid could prevent his untimely death. Whentwenty-five samples of candy from different shops were tested by the Agricultural Bureau in 1891, not one of them was made from cane sugar, and the bright colors were aniline dyes.

Turning from sweet to sour, we find that verdigris colors our pickles; that oil of vitriol is often substituted for acetic acid to acidify vinegar; in short, that frauds by which unscrupulous persons try to enrich themselves at the expense of the ignorant poor are too numerous to mention here. Experts recently have

testified before the Pure Food Investigating Committee of the United States Senate that a large portion of all articles of food and drink used in our country is adulterated.

They include butter and cheese, coffee and spices, molasses and honey. Fish and fowl, meat and vegetables are more wholesome fresh than preserved. Boracic acid generally used for preservation retards digestion, and prevents it when too much comes into a weak stomach. One of the worst impositions is the admixture of alum in the manufacture of yeast cakes and baking powders, because almost every cook uses them, quickly to raise the leaven of bread. As this is often not thoroughly masticated when it passes from the mouth into the alimentary canal, it becomes with residues of the alum a doughy ball, to digest which the poor stomach must wrestle for many hours.

The druggist on the continent of Europe is required to make an independent analysis of the medicine he disposes of. To enforce this rule, where patent medicines too often take the place of prescriptions, may be difficult; but means should be found to afford our people better protection against adulterations. Teas colored by lime and indigo were largely imported, until a law was enacted that, before being landed, all teas must be tested by officials of the Custom House and the impure teas returned. This seems to be the only food, if food it can be called, the purity of which is controlled by the Federal Government. Our system of internal revenue stamps could be extended, so that every article of food and medicine which is sold in sealed packages should be stamped, so that the United States stamp would indicate that it has been officially tested.

To require from manufacturers labels with an analysis of the ingredients of their products, as has been suggested, would be impracticable; they should not be compelled to divulge their trade secrets. Laws against adulteration which exist in one State can seldom be enforced against citizens of another State. Government inspection and revenue stamps might, however, become a guarantee of the purity of our products the world over.

On account of its more speedy assimilation, a preponderance of animal food in our diet is desirable. We too often swallow, in our haste, indigestible parts, like bones and sinews of animals, the pits and skins of vegetables, turning our stomachs into vessels which must carry useless ballast for an indefinite period. When,

in consequence, our delicate alimentary canals become clogged, attempts to dispose of the burden cause insomnia. Often falsely attributed to other causes, illness grows upon us insidiously, and gradually it turns its victims into dyspeptic misanthropes. The sweetest songs grate on their ears, the fragrance of flowers nauseates their nostrils, the sun to their eyes seems like a fiery ball, the moon like a green cheese. Their organs become weak, so that death may be caused by the imposition of the slightest additional task.

Active, outdoor exercise, like air and sunshine, is one of the necessities of life. Persons with sedentary occupations who know how essential it is, usually find means to take it. My German teacher sat reading by his open window, and took a sitting promenade by swaying his legs to and fro, giving them an occasional straight kick for the sake of variety. Travelling by rail, I walk up and down the platform where stoppages permit, or along the aisle if too long caged in the car. When duties prevented his daily constitutional, Bismarck danced with Princesses at Court balls, and Emperor William paced for hours up and down his room when storm prevented him from sallying forth.

As a machine will rust when it ceases to move, so will a human body which gets no exercise decay. The popularity of out-door sport, which has been developed so strongly in the latter part of the century, points toward a decided improvement of our race. The time may not be distant when it will be considered a misdemeanor to be ill, and when the perfunctory question, "How are you?" will be deemed an insult, because it may imply that we have committed a crime in neglecting ourselves. We shall then be able to relish our food without appetizers, and to sleep without nightmares; we shall cease to forbode evil which never comes and to dwell on errors of the past which can no longer be retrieved. Following the sound advice which Goethe gave, we will let no day pass without reciting a poem or singing a song; and we may become able to enjoy while we live all the advantages of a sound mind in a sound body, "*mens sana in corpore sano.*"

LOUIS WINDMÜLLER.